

Peer Support Fife

February 2011

Volume 2, Issue 2

PeerSupportFife.org.uk

News Bulletin

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The Challenge of Employability

There is no doubt that this year will be difficult, with few new jobs and of those, the tabloids tell us, 97% are part-time. Council posts are mostly internal and, although NHS funding is 'ringfenced' not many of us will have the required qualifications to fit in. And voluntary sector cuts are upon us with national organisations having to offer voluntary redundancy or worse. Funding to colleges and universities has been cut so unemployment figures are bound to rise even further, as no longer can the out of

work folk be hidden within further/higher education. At the same time the government wants to reduce numbers of people on disability and incapacity benefits, the media claiming that many are shirking. The reality for many of us is that 'employability' is theoretical when there are few jobs available. Not only will we have to 'recover' and have less money to live on but there are not likely to be many jobs for us to apply for.

Chrys Muirhead,
Convener

Peer Support Fife

is an emerging voluntary organisation working in mental health recovery - promoting peer support user, survivor and carer involvement & peer advocacy

event

'Having a Voice & Making a Difference' Workshop Edinburgh

Peer Support Fife are leading a **workshop** at the **SCVO** Gathering on Wednesday **23 February** 2011 in the **Edinburgh** International Conference Centre, supported by friends: around mental health user, survivor and carer involvement, the opportunities and challenges around 'having a voice and making a difference'.

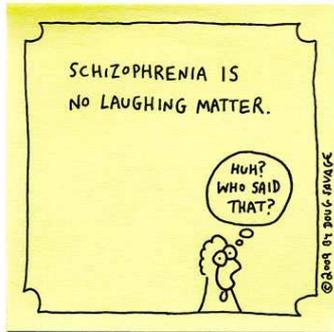
The style will be informal, the programme flexible, the content imaginative (hopefully) and underpinned with a sense of humour (absolutely).

www.gatherscotland.org.uk

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Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



events

Solution Focused Approaches Workshop
Monday **28** February &
Tuesday **1** March 2011

For people with experience of mental health problems and their carers a 2 day **free** workshop in Cupar Old Parish Centre 9.30am to 4.30pm
Facilitator: **Steve Smith**
Lecturer in Mental Health Robert Gordon University

www.rgu.ac.uk

only **18** places

"the person is not the problem, the problem is the problem"



Mary O'Hagan

Return visit to Fife

Monday **28** March 2011

Scores Hotel, **St Andrews**

Morning event for workers

Afternoon workshop for service users, survivors, carers and workers

Jointly funded by Fife Council, NHS Fife and PS Fife

By invitation [and some places for the keen]

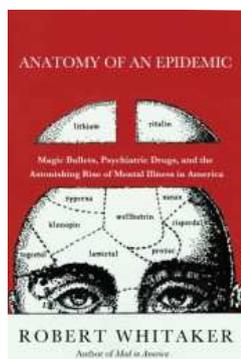
www.maryohagan.com / www.wellbeingrecovery.com

Peer Support Workshop
Monday **21** March 2011
12.00pm - 3.00pm
Quaker Meeting House
Crown Street, **Aberdeen**
Facilitator:
Chrys Muirhead

"what do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other"

~ George Elliott

Anatomy of an Epidemic



A book by **Robert Whitaker**, author of 'Mad in America', investigative reporter and Pulitzer Prize finalist.

"Anatomy of an Epidemic investigates a profoundly troubling question: do psychiatric medications increase the likelihood that people taking them, far from being helped, are more likely to become chronically ill?"

In making a compelling case that our current psychotropic drugs are causing as much - if not more - harm than good, Robert Whitaker reviews the scientific literature thoroughly, demonstrating how much of the evidence is on his side. There is nothing unorthodox here - this case is solid and evidence-backed. If psychiatry wants to retain its credibility with the public, it will now have to engage with the scientific argument at the core of this cogently and elegantly written book."

David Healy, Professor of Psychiatry, Cardiff University, author of *The Antidepressant Era* and *Let Them Eat Prozac*

Robert Whitaker's Blog:

www.madinamerica.com/madinamerica.com/Whitaker/Whitaker

Information on Upcoming Talks, Answering the Critics, Radio Interviews/Podcasts, Talks etc

Biography: Robert Whitaker is the author of four books, two of which tell of the history of psychiatry. His first, *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill* was named by *Discover* magazine as one of the best science books of 2002, while the American Library Association named it one of the best history books of that year.

His newest book, *Anatomy of an Epidemic: Magic Bullets, Psychiatric Drugs, and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America*, investigates the astonishing rise in the number of disabled mentally ill in the United States.

Prior to writing books, Robert Whitaker worked as the science and medical reporter at the *Albany Times Union* newspaper in New York for a number of years. His journalism articles won several national awards, including a George Polk award for medical writing, and a National Association of Science Writers' award for best magazine article. A series he co-wrote for *The Boston Globe* was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1998.

Robert Whitaker Visit to Ireland

Friday 25 Feb 11.00am - 2.00pm

Athlone Institute of Technology

Saturday 26 Feb 2.00pm

Trinity College Campus, Dublin

Monday 28 Feb 7.30pm

Carrigaline, Co Cork [hosted by Mind Freedom Ireland]

Tue 1 March 6.00pm - 8.00pm

University College Cork

Wed 2 March 7.30pm

D4 Ballsbridge Inn, Dublin [hosted by The Wellbeing Foundation]

Robert Whitaker Visit to England

Wednesday 23 Feb 6.00pm

The Hylands Hotel, Coventry [Elemental Haven for Heroes]

"The Philadelphia Association was founded as a Charity in 1965 by the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst RD Laing and a number of his colleagues. It stated as its central objective - in terms appropriate to the Association's formal existence as a Charity - "the relief of mental illness of all descriptions, in particular schizophrenia". From the beginning, however, its more radical intention was to question the way in which the "facts" of "mental health" and "mental illness" are seen."

RD Laing

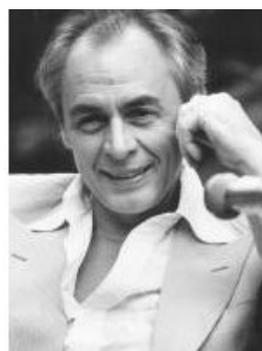


Photo courtesy of Dorothee von Grieff © copyright

spoke for the first time in months."

The Observer, 1 June 2008

www.philadelphia-association.co.uk

"There is a great deal of pain in life and perhaps the only pain that can be avoided is the pain that comes from trying to avoid pain."

~ RD Laing

The Tidal Model is Appreciated in Cupar, Fife



Poppy, Chrys & Phil



Cupar Tidal Crew day 2



Tea break fun

Phil Barker and Poppy Buchanan-Barker skilfully captained a workshop on the 20 & 21 January in Cupar, Fife - a journey through the Tidal Model with ports of call on the way. The recruits set sail on a voyage of discovery, having made their way from the north and the south, becoming more than participants as they considered solutions. The realisation dawned on us that, although we were travellers together, it was up to each of us to carry our own load, to be strengthened for the journey and to encourage others to do the same.

The Key Tidal Question

The Tidal Model is focused on asking one important question:

- ◆ How can we help people address, deal with, overcome, or come to terms with their problems of human living?

Whether we are professionals, friends, family members or someone who is in 'the same boat' the answer is the same:

1. First, we must let the person **teach** us about her or his experience
2. Then, and only then, we can begin to explore - with the person - what might **need to be done** if the person is to address, resolve, fix or come to terms with this particular problem of human living

The Tidal Model Manual, p15
Phil Barker and Poppy Buchanan-Barker 2007

"The golden rule is that there are no golden rules"
George Bernard Shaw

The Double Bind

A paradoxical situation in which someone finds themselves - an accurate description I think of the current psychiatric system.

If we are experiencing an alternative universe or altered states of consciousness then we are harshly brought back down to earth with drugs that sedate and often depress. We might have wanted or expected a kind word or a listening ear, instead we face a straitjacket approach, one of mastery and control.

And yet the nursing staff and the psychiatrist are not unsympathetic but they seem to be caught up in a maelstrom of their own making. They appear to have no other means at hand to deal with 'madness' except to overcome and to restrain. The nurses talk of 'fighting fires' and when the ward is quiet they are bored. The ones doing constant 'obs', usually the nursing assistants but sometimes the charge nurse or others, describe

it as 'watching paint dry'. I have seen them (these guardians) reading the newspaper, yawning, falling asleep while 'keeping an eye' on the recalcitrant 'victim'.

Over a period of 9wks I saw one person on constant obs, 24/7, not sure why but think they might have been threatening to kill themselves. One good thing about this was that the nurse had to build up a relationship with the patient, they had no other option, and there was actually communication going on between them - a rare thing in a psychiatric ward in my experience except between the nurses or between the patients.

The double bind - being damned if you do and damned if you don't - is in the lack of choice when experiencing serious mental ill health or a crisis. The same is true for the nurses and psychiatrists who are on the treadmill of treatment that they, if they were honest, are not happy with yet can't seem to get out of.

Both patients and professionals are partners on the *psychiatric dancefloor* with no-one actually leading (although the professionals 'think' they are), going round and round in circles. It takes courage to stop the music or to get off the dancefloor. I want to stop the music as I've already got off the dancefloor and it is fine. Stopping the music would give everyone a chance to rest and consider other tunes or different partners.

~ Chrys Muirhead

Chorus Time

The Minute Waltz approaches its conclusion
As the Dance of the Hours begins.

Back and forth, side to side they advance
...In sequence and in unison, the followers
With their leaders dictating the pace.

In self-imposed deliberate disorientation
They whirl across the floor like dervishes,
Achieving transcendental ecstasy for a second.
Carefully balanced harmony choreographed
By an unseen hand that plays the tune:
Nothing to make a song and dance about.

~ John Sawkins

The Trail is the Thing new book from Pathways team at KU

"The thing to remember when travelling is that the trail is the thing, not the end of the trail."

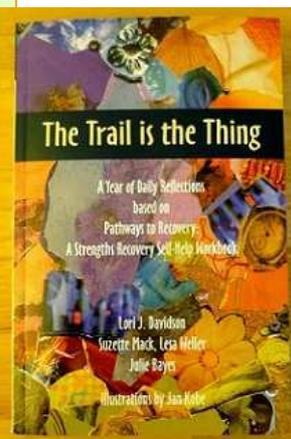
~ Louis L'Amour

Introducing a new book, hot off the press, from the **University of Kansas** School of Social Welfare, Office of Mental Health Research & Training:

The Trail is the Thing

A year of daily reflections based on their successful **Pathways to Recovery** strengths self help workbook. This book:

"is the result of almost 2 years of work from 4 authors and more than 20 individuals who provided their ideas, edits and support to bring readers of Pathways to Recovery a new tool ... it is about finding the things in life that give passion, purpose and meaning."



The authors of this book do not receive profit from sales of this workbook. All profits are designated for reprinting of the book and to provide scholarships for Kansas residents with the lived experience of mental illness or trauma to return to post-secondary education.

Supported Education Group, Office of

Mental Health Research and Training
@ School of Social Welfare, The University of Kansas

www.socwel.ku.edu

www.pathwaystorecoverybooks.com

[website coming soon]

